

University of Wisconsin-Madison
Syllabus: Foreign Policies of Imperial Japan, 1862-1945
Fall Semester, 2009

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Wednesday 2:30pm-3:45pm
Location: B302 Birge

Office Hours: Wednesday 4pm-6pm; and by appointment

The purpose of this course is to introduce to students one specific perspective of the only non-Western imperialist power in the modern history: the foreign policies of imperial Japan. Imperialism can be discussed from various aspects, ranging from social control in colonies, to economic relations between the metropolis and colonies, to the efforts of transforming colonial societies. Practically, a course of one-semester length on imperialism could either broadly touches upon every aspects of imperialism with limited depth or narrowly focuses on some specific perspective and goes into much detail. This course has adopted the later approach and focuses on explaining the motivations behind Japan's expansionist foreign policies in the first half of the last century.

The design of this course is to review the development of Japanese imperialism through a combination of theoretical tools and historical materials. Therefore, the course begins with the introduction of historiography and international relations theories to acquaint students with these theoretical foundations. By knowing historiography, students are expected to be able to read historical materials critically and pay attention to elements of historical writing, such as interpretation and bias. International relations theories provide students with basic paradigms for explaining state behavior, including expansion.

The course then shifts gear to the different stages of Japanese imperialism. A chronological framework is adopted here. The whole time span dates back to the years when the treaty port system was first established in Japan in 1853, in order to put the development of Japan's imperialism into historical context. The chronology ends in 1941, the year that Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, which led to the Pacific War and eventually brought to an end the era of Japanese imperialism. Within the chronology, significant events, such as the Sino-Japanese War and Russo-Japanese War, are used as cut points because they oftentimes suggest the end of one stage of Japan's imperialism and usher in another. It is believed that such a chronological layout would provide students with a clear and easy framework to grasp the evolution of Japan's imperialism.

After delineating a chronologic contour of Japanese imperialism, we zoom in on specific foreign policies topics. The first part is power relations. We discuss Japan's alliance relations with Great Britain, which was critical to Japan's latitude of action in Northeast Asia during the early stage of its empire building. We then discuss the evolution of the U.S.-Japan rivalry, which eventually led to a clash between the two Pacific powers and brought down the Japanese empire. The second part is case studies. We focus on three key pieces of jigsaws of the Japanese empire, Taiwan, Korea, and Manchuria, and discuss the motivations behind their annexation or

occupation.

The course concludes with a review of the historical developments of Japanese imperialism and tries to adventure some explanations.

Rather than pure descriptions, the course tilts toward theoretical examinations of the history of Japanese imperialism; therefore, previous knowledge of basic international relations theories, such as taking the course PS103 Intro-International Relations, is preferred. The class size is kept small in order to facilitate in class discussion.

Textbook and Reading Bricks:

Beasley, William G. 1987. *Japanese Imperialism, 1894-1945*. Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press. Available at the University Bookstore and Amazon.com.

Additional reading materials will be assembled into a reading brick, available at Bob's Copy Shop.

Course Requirements:

Class participation 20%

Research prospectus 30%, due October 21.

Research paper 50%, due December 16.

Research paper topics:

1. Why did Japan go to war with China in 1937?
2. Was the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-05 an "unnecessary" conflict?
3. Why did Taiwan, Korea, or Manchuria fall victim to Japanese imperialism?
4. What were the impacts of World War I on the balance of power in East Asia and the development of Japanese imperialism?
5. Why did Britain and Japan ally with each other in early last century and why did the alliance demise in the early 1920s?
6. What were the reasons of estrangement between the United States and Japan between 1908 and 1941?

Course Outline

Part I: Theoretical foundations

September 2: Historiography

"Eric Hobsbawm" and "William Appleman Williams." In Henry Abelove (ed.) *Visions of History*. New York: Pantheon Books. 1983.

Get a sense of how prominent historians view history and historical writings.

September 9: Theories of International Relations: Realism and Neorealism

Morgenthau, Hans J. 1967. *Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, 4th ed. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. Pp. 3-15.

Classical realist arguments that states pursue power and care about relative power in order to maximize their chance of survival.

Waltz, Kenneth. 1979. *Theory of International Politics*. New York: McGraw-Hill Publishing. Chapter 5 and 6.

The foundational work of neorealism that emphasizes the structure of the international system, i.e. the distribution of power among states. The desire of states to maximize security ensure balance of power will recur in the international system.

September 16: Theories of International Relations: Liberalism and Marxism

Moravcsik, Andrew. 1997. "Taking Preferences Seriously: A Liberal Theory of International Politics." *International Organization* 51(4):513-553.

Liberalists view the state as a representative institute constantly subject to capture and recapture by coalitions of social actors. The configuration and reconfiguration of state preferences matter most in world politics.

Doyle, Michael. 1997. *Ways of War and Peace*. New York, N.Y: W. W. Norton & Company. pp. 340-64.

Lenin defines imperialism as the monopoly of capital, the highest stage of capitalism: superabundance of capital in the advanced capitalist economies necessitates the search for profitable investment; domestic underconsumption drives monopolies to seek markets in the undeveloped areas of the world, and in order to secure a monopoly, control of markets and sources of raw materials is sought.

September 23: Foreign Policy and Domestic politics

Putnam, Robert. 1988. "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games." *International Organization* 42(3): 427-60.

Putnam argues that international negotiation can be conceived as a two-level game. At the national level, domestic groups pursue their interests by pressuring the government to adopt favorable policies, and politicians seek power by constructing coalitions among those groups. At the international level, national governments seek to maximize their own ability to satisfy domestic pressures, while minimizing the adverse consequences of foreign developments.

Duus, Peter. 1995. "The Origins of Meiji Imperialism." In Peter Duus, *The Abacus and the Sword: The Japanese Penetration of Korea, 1895-1910*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Duus argues that the adoption of an expansionist policy involved a coalition of groups or individuals, each with something quite different in mind. Imperialism is a collective enterprise, a bandwagon ridden by a diverse band of passengers who climb aboard at different times with different destinations but who are all heading in the same direction. Meiji imperialism was the product of a complex coalition uniting the Meiji leaders, the symbiotic and mutual-reinforcing

ties between political and economic processes.

September 30: Theories of Imperialism

Beasley. "Introduction: Explanation of Imperialism."

Jansen, Marius. 1984. "Japanese Imperialism: Late Meiji Perspectives." In Ramon Myers and Mark Peattie (ed.). *The Japanese Colonial Empire*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Pp. 61-79.

Beasley's definition of imperialism, and Jansen's discussion of Meiji elites' attitudes toward imperialism.

Part II: Chronological development

October 7: Background: The Treaty Port System, the Meiji Restoration and Modernization 1853-1894

Beasley. "The Treaty Port System and Japan," and "Modernization and Imperialism."

Western imperialism, manifested in the treaty port system, presented a danger against which radical reform appeared to be the only promising defense of Japan. Beasley thus argues that modernization was the linkage between the treaty port system and the emergence of Japan's own imperialism. The slogan of "wealth and strength" and the debate of "quit Asia" and "join Asia" emerged in this period and affected the ensuing development of Japanese imperialism.

Beasley, William G. 1972. *The Meiji Restoration*. Stanford, C.A.: Stanford University Press. Pp. 1-12.

A brief introduction to the social, economic and political backgrounds and consequences of the Meiji restoration. Competing interpretations of the restoration are also concisely surveyed.

October 14: The Sino-Japanese War, the Triple Intervention, and the Russo-Japanese War, 1894-1905

Beasley. "Intervention in Korea, 1894-1895," and "The Peace Settlement with China, 1894-1896."

Japan's strategic concerns over Korea drove Meiji Japan to seek a sphere of influence over the peninsula, which eventually led to a war with China. As a result of the peace settlement of the 1894-95 Sino-Japanese war, Japan acquired its first colony, Taiwan, and joined the rank of imperialist powers. Beasley thus claimed the war over Korea represented the first stage of Japanese imperial expansion. However, Japan's territorial ambition over Liaotung was thwarted by the Triple Intervention. Making good this territorial setback and exploiting the rights that had been gained in the commercial settlement were to be the main strands in Japanese imperialism in the following years.

Beasley. "New Imperialism and the War with Russia, 1895-1905."

The Sino-Japanese War further highlighted the weakness of China and precipitated Western

powers' actions to ensure prerogatives in the country—some pursued spheres of influence while others preferred “Open Door” policy. Russia’s expanding influence in Manchuria threatened Japan’s new security frontline in Korea, making Japan tilt toward the less-preferred “Open Door” policy to secure sympathy of Britain and America and resort to war to solve contradiction with the tsar.

Nish, Ian. 1985. *The Origins of the Russo-Japanese War*. London; New York: Longman. Pp. 1-20.

Nish argues that in the decades of imperialism, railways were a means of expansion, and the deteriorating Russo-Japanese relationship has to be seen against the background of railway building.

October 21: The Annexation of Korea, the Chinese Revolution and the Twenty-one Demands, and the WWI, 1905-1918

Beasley. “Empire in North-East Asia, 1905-1910.”

Japan’s victory in the Russo-Japanese War put Korea under its tight grip, but the costs of dealing with frequent unrests on the peninsula eventually led to Japan’s decision to exert total control through annexation. Meanwhile, the conflict between strategic and economic interests, manifest in the divergent positions between the army and the Foreign Ministry (and the business in most part) with regard to policies toward Manchuria, highlighted the disagreement that would recur during crisis time in Japanese policy-making in the following two and half decades.

Beasley. “Chinese Revolution and World War.”

The outbreak of the First World War in Europe saw two important developments in Japanese imperialism—Japan became an international creditor for the first time and had much greater freedom of action in East Asia. As a result, Japan expanded its penetration into China, manifest in the Twenty-one Demands in 1915. However, alarmed by potential Chinese antagonism, the thought of a “co-prosperity” relations with China in which Japan was privileged also emerged.

October 28: Economic Expansion, the Collapse of World Trade and the Making of Manchukuo 1918-1932

Beasley. “The Treaty Port System in Jeopardy, 1918-1931.”

Iriye, Akira. 1974. “The Failure of Economic Expansionism, 1918-1931.” In Bernard Silberman and Harry Harootunian (ed.). *Japan in Crisis*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. pp. 237-69.

The consequence of WWI changed the power balance in East Asia, leaving the United States together with Japan as the two remaining major powers in the region with latitude of action (Britain to a much less extent) and putting the two on a potential collision course. Meanwhile, the rise of Chinese nationalism rendered the treaty port system unimplementable. When the U.S. and Britain gradually relinquished their treaty rights, Japan grudgingly followed, which deprived Japan one of the pillars of its imperialism and precipitated its search for alternatives.

Beasley. “The Making of Manchukuo, 1931-1932.”

The hardship brought about by the collapse of world trade and the formation of regional economic blocs undermined the argument of “internationalism,” i.e. self-restraint in foreign policy in exchange of benefits from the international system. In its replacement, risk-acceptance and extracting economic benefits through direct political control ascended to dominance, best manifested in the making of Manchukuo in Northeast China. The making of Manchukuo highlighted two developments in Japanese imperialism: a pattern of “subimperialism”—*fait accompli* by army field commanders, endorsed by the high command, and eventually accepted by the cabinet, and a model of how territories acquired in such a way might be ruled.

November 4: Military Expansion: The New Order and the Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere, 1932-1945

Beasley. “Japan’s New Order in North-east Asia.”

The lack of stakes in contemporary international order (largely resulting from the collapse of world trade and the rise of protectionism among countries) removed restraints on Japan’s longstanding territorial ambitions and precipitated its drive to build its own economic and strategic bloc. Expansion in China brought up questions about how to effectively control the occupied territories and how to reconcile its actions with the slogans such as “coexistence” and “co-prosperity,” and the answer was the New Order. This period also witnessed what Beasley called “frontier imperialism”: a habit of intervention in territories adjacent to those already held.

Beasley. “Advance to the South.” Glance through “The Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere.”

The pursuance of self-sufficiency as a result of the closure of world trade created dilemma between the necessity of expansion to Southeast Asia to secure the supply of strategic raw materials such as oil and the desire to avoid alarming the powers into a united front against Japan’s actions. The outbreak of the war in Europe in 1939, as the war twenty-five years ago, again gave Japan a freer hand in its south advance. However, Beasley argues, Japan’s expansion to Southeast Asia threatened British war ability in Europe and became a concern of the United States. The U.S. started embargo on Japan in 1941, which eventually led to head-on confrontation between the two.

Iriye, Akira. 1971. “The Failure of Military Expansionism.” In James Morley (ed.). *Dilemmas of Growth in Prewar Japan*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Pp. 107-38.

Part III: Specific Topics—Power Relations

November 11: British-Japanese Alliance, 1902-1923

Nish, Ian. 1966. *The Anglo-Japanese Alliances: The Diplomacy of Two Island Empires 1894-1907*. London: Athlone Press. pp. 1-19, 365-77.

Nish discusses the calculation of the Anglo-Japanese alliance from the perspectives of the

British and Japanese governments and the effects of the alliance on the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War.

Nish, Ian. 1972. *Alliance in Decline: A Study in Anglo-Japanese Relations 1908-23*. London: Athlone Press. pp. 3-14, 383-97.

Nish describes the decline of the Anglo-Japanese alliance as a protracted process of disappointment and disillusion, rather than one of abrupt disruption.

November 18: U.S.-Japan Rivalry

Iriye, Akira. 1972. *Pacific Estrangement: Japanese and American Expansion, 1897-1911*. Cambridge, M.A.: Harvard University Press. pp. 202-27.

America's liberal expansionism and Japan's continental expansionism in China bred estrangement between the two countries at the end of the first decade of the last century.

Iriye, Akira. 1967. *Across the Pacific: An Inner History of American-East Asian Relations*. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. pp. 111-37, 200-26.

Iriye argues that the self-conscious antagonism between Japan and the U.S. came to a climax during World War I, and the Japanese navy started to view a conflict with the American navy as inevitable. In the late 1930s, Japan's New Order in Asia, particularly its expansion toward Southeast Asia eventually put the U.S. and Japan on a collision course.

Part III: Specific Topics—Case Studies

November 25: Taiwan and Korea

Chen, Edward I-te. 1977. "Japan's Decision to Annex Taiwan: A Study of Muto-Ito Diplomacy," *Journal of Asian Studies* 37(1): 61-72.

The decision to press for cession of Taiwan was a product of jockeying and influence within the leadership that produced a decision by Ito Hirobumi for cession as less dangerous and less consequential than larger plans nurtured by others.

Conroy, Hilary. 1960. *Japanese Seizure of Korea: 1868-1910: A Study of Realism and Idealism in International Relations*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. pp. 17-77, 492-507.

Classical arguments that claimed economic matters had no important effect in determining the Japanese course toward the annexation of Korea.

December 2: Manchuria

Ogata, Sadako N. 1964. *Defiance in Manchuria: The Making of Japanese Foreign Policy, 1931-1932*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press. pp. xiii-xvi, 1-50.

Ogata describes the Manchuria Affair as a story of a triangular relationship, in which middle and

lower grade army officers challenged the existing military and civilian leadership, calling for radical reform in foreign and domestic policies in the face of interwar sufferings. In the process, military actions changed the political power structure, which in turn affected policy formulation.

Part IV: Conclusion

December 9: Conclusion: How Should We Explain Japanese Imperialism?

Beasley. "The Nature of Japanese Imperialism."

How should we explain Japan's imperialism? Putting Japanese imperialism into comparative contexts, Beasley accepts an explanation of multiple causations. Similar to Western imperialism, the development of Japanese imperialism reflected the phases of the country's economic growth, but the external circumstance shaped by Western imperialism provided examples as well as constraints and also embedded strong strategic elements into Japanese imperialism.